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Viewing cable 06BEIRUT2490, TFLE01: MARWAN HAMADEH DISCUSSES CEASE-FIRE

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| Reference ID | Created | Released | Classification | Origin |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 06BEIRUT2490 | 2006-07-29 09:58 | 2011-08-30 01:44 | CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN | Embassy Beirut |

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/29/2016
TAGS: [IR](#) [IS](#) [LE](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SY](#)
SUBJECT: TFLE01: MARWAN HAMADEH DISCUSSES CEASE-FIRE

POSSIBILITIES

Classified By: Ambassador Jeffrey D. Feltman. Reason: Section 1.4 (d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C/NF) During a July 28 meeting with the Ambassador and econoff, Minister of Telecommunications Marwan Hamadeh gave a briefing on the July 27 cabinet meeting and the Rome conference. Al-Nahar publisher Ghassan Tueni was also present. Hamadeh said the cabinet meeting was "epic" as he verbally parried President Lahoud and the Shia ministers. In the end the cabinet unanimously approved all seven points from Prime Minister Siniora's speech in Rome. Regarding Rome, Hamadeh reported that the side conversations were good, especially with Secretary Rice. He also met Saad Hariri whom he advised to say out of Lebanon for now. Reviewing cease-fire language, Hamadeh said he was concerned about recent Israeli military moves. An EU source had told him the military campaign would probably continue for 2-5 weeks. When asked how the GOL would enforce sovereignty over all of Lebanon, Hamadeh replied that the GOL and LAF would focus only on Hizballah's rocket arsenal and heavy weapons. Hizballah could either send it back to Iran and Syria, give it to the LAF, or give it to the multi-national stabilization force. End summary.

HAMADEH TAKES A STAND AT JULY 27 CABINET MEETING

¶2. (C/NF) On the night of July 28, the Ambassador and econoff met with Minister of Telecommunications Marwan Hamadeh at his apartment. "An Nahar" General Manager Ghassan Tueni was also there for much of the meeting, his main contribution filling us in with breaking press reports (almost all of which later proved to be erroneous). Hamadeh began by briefing the Ambassador on the July 27 cabinet meeting. "It was epic," smiled Hamadeh. He said he fought with President Emile Lahoud, the Shia ministers, and some of the "weak technocrats" of Saad Hariri's Mustaqbal (Future) movement. When the Amal ministers chastised Prime Minister Siniora's speech in Rome, Hamadeh replied that Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri had approved the speech beforehand, which "shut them up." Hamadeh also pointed out that Berri had defended Siniora in an interview with "Al Jazeera" television.

¶3. (C/NF) In the cabinet meeting, Hamadeh proposed that the cabinet approve the PM's statement. Lahoud and the Hizballah ministers were furious about the idea of a new mandate and scope for a peacekeeping force. Hamadeh told Lahoud that there is "no more UNIFIL," so he should forget about it. "I told him the cabinet decides, not you...and that shut him up," Hamadeh boasted. Then Lahoud raised the issue of the seven villages. Siniora snapped that the borders with Palestine were drawn up in the 1920s before the boundaries of Greater Lebanon were created. "Do you want to call into question the borders of Greater Lebanon?" Siniora asked Lahoud. Foreign Minister Fawzi Salloukh, normally a Amal-Hizballah mouthpiece, did not say a word. Hamadeh said he told the Hizballah ministers that Hizballah had taken Lebanon to war without asking the rest of the cabinet, so the cabinet must take a position now. And, Hamadeh added, he told Hizballah ministers that if they keep attacking Siniora, it will be open war with Hamadeh as well. At the end of this heated debate, the cabinet unanimously approved all seven points of Siniora's Rome speech.

ROME WAS "GOOD"

¶4. (C/NF) The Ambassador asked Hamadeh how the Rome conference went on July 26. Hamadeh replied that there were "good side conversations," especially Siniora's discussion with Secretary Rice. The Russians wanted an immediate cease-fire, while the British and Germans were unclear.

Hamadeh described the French non-paper as confusing, but with some good elements.

15. (C/NF) Hamadeh also talked to Saad Hariri. Hariri reported that the Saudis had told him that the king salutes Druze leader Walid Jumblatt. Hamadeh advised Hariri not to return to Lebanon at this time. "I told him that he would be met at Qoraytem by 20,000 refugees begging for food," said Hamadeh. Hamadeh later commented that Hariri was most deceived by Hizballah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah.

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Michel Aoun, too, was deceived but he has no where to go. Aoun and Hizballah are now asking for a "war government," according to Hamadeh.

CEASE-FIRE AND BEYOND

16. (C/NF) The Ambassador briefed Hamadeh on the proposals for a cease-fire. Hamadeh was concerned about the Israeli attitude. He noted that Israel had called up tens of thousands of reservists. Hamadeh's EU sources told him that a cease-fire was two to five weeks away. Going through some of the points, Hamadeh commented that a 20 km buffer zone in southern Lebanon would mean that a Shia militia would be in Mount Lebanon and then there would be civil war. The buffer zone must be for all of Lebanon, Hamadeh asserted. Hamadeh agreed that the GOL must request a multi-national stabilization force.

17. (C/NF) The Ambassador asked Hamadeh how would the GOL actualize its calls to enforce sovereignty over all of Lebanon. Hamadeh replied that the GOL and LAF would demand only Hizballah's rockets and other heavy weaponry. The GOL would not worry about small arms, such as AK-47 assault rifles, since everyone in Lebanon is armed. There would be three options for Hizballah's rockets: 1) send them back to Iran and Syria, 2) give to the LAF, 3) give them to the international stabilization force. Hamadeh speculated that Hizballah would never support option 3, and option 2 would be an embarrassment for the LAF, because then it would have to create a new rocket forces unit to operate weapons it is not accustomed to using. The Ambassador pressed Hamadeh on why the GOL had not already disarmed Hizballah under the international support of UNSCR 1559 and 1680. Hamadeh answered that with 1559, Lebanon was in "intensive care," and with 1680 March 14 had made a mistake by allowing Hizballah to join the government.

18. (C/NF) Finally, Hamadeh reported that the Iranian Embassy had tried to put an antenna in the middle of the renowned archaeological ruins at Baalbeck. "We stopped them by force," he claimed.

FELTMAN